



**A message from
Dr. Suellen Reed
Superintendent of
Public Instruction**

Fall 2004

Dear Colleagues:

Welcome back to a new school year and the host of opportunities and challenges before us in 2004 - 2005. This is an exciting, yet demanding time of year for educators. Yet, Indiana should take great pride in the accomplishments of the last several years and look to the future with confidence and great expectations.

We are proud to implement a Grade 3 through Grade 10 Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) program in English/language arts and mathematics and Grade 5 science this fall. This issue of *Indiana Educator* provides information that I expect every Indiana educator will find valuable.

Increasing levels of student achievement is the focus of our business, and it drives our work and decision-making. The gains we have made, even under these difficult financial times, are significant. We have worked hard to attain our high standards and accountability system and that hard work is paying off.

In the area of academic achievement Indiana has:

- Topped the national composite average score on the ACT college entrance exam for 14 consecutive years. Indiana's 2004 average composite score was 21.6 compared to the national score of 20.9;

- Raised SAT scores in 2003 by three points for a total of 1,004—up two points to 500 on the Verbal portion and up one point to 504 on Mathematics. Over the past ten years, Indiana test takers have increased their scores by 30 points, outpacing national gains of 23 during the same period.

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New GQE Public Awareness Campaign in Full Swing

- Efforts also under way to ensure student and parent awareness of Grade 3-9 testing

Indiana schools will be administering ISTEP+ assessments in Grades 3-10 in English/language arts and mathematics and science in Grade 5 this fall. On September 21-23, this year's Grade 10 students will be the first class to take the state's New Graduation Qualifying Exam (GQE). Aligned to Indiana's more rigorous academic standards, the new GQE tests English skills through Grade 9 and mathematics skills through Grade 8 and Algebra I.

In an effort to ensure that Indiana students are informed of these higher expectations and provided with the best opportunity for success, the Department of Education has developed a new statewide GQE public awareness

campaign targeted at

THIS IS A TEST

students in the Class of 2007 and beyond. The new GQE campaign replaces the "Take It To Make It" campaign that has been used for the past seven years. In addition, informational ISTEP+ fold-out posters are being delivered to schools for distribution to students in Grades 3-10. These posters contain detailed information for students and parents regarding this year's ISTEP+ testing for all grade levels.

The theme of the new campaign, "This is a Test," is designed to not only reinforce the importance of succeeding on the GQE, but also stress how student performance in school lays the foundation for success later in life. The campaign is based on the importance of making smart choices, reminding students that the decisions made today have a significant impact on future options and opportunities.

In a comprehensive effort, the GQE campaign uses television, radio, outdoor advertising, and other print materials. In August, Indiana high schools and corporation offices received the following

New GQE Campaign

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• Improved Fall 2003 Indiana Statewide Testing for Educational Progress-Plus (ISTEP+) scores in

all areas, with the largest improvement shown against Indiana's new, higher academic standards in mathematics.

• Field tested ISTEP+ in four additional grade levels, 4, 5, 7, and 9, during Fall 2003 in preparation for a full administration of ISTEP+ in Grades 3 through 10 in Fall 2004.

• Delivered Fall 2003 ISTEP+ reports—which arrived in school corporation offices the week of Thanksgiving—earlier than ever before, completing scoring and delivery of reports in approximately 35 business days.

In the national arena, Indiana has:

• Received top honors, leading all other states and the District of Columbia in the first comprehensive state by state analysis of K-12 U.S. history standards conducted by the Thomas B. Fordham Foundation.

• Been awarded a competitive State Improvement Grant (SIG) from the U.S. Department of Education worth \$6.6 million over the next five years. The Division of Exceptional

• Learners prepared the grant application and will oversee the implementation of the project, known as the IN SIG project.

• Outscored the national average in Grades 4 and 8 in reading and math on "the nation's report card." The National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) is the only nationally representative assessment of what America's students know and can do in key subject areas. In addition to being above the national averages, no more than eight states scored significantly higher than Indiana in any category.

• Achieved high ratings in *Education Week's* annual *Quality Counts 2004*, receiving an A- under Standards and Accountability with only eight states receiving a higher score.

• Acquired national recognition from the Pathways to College Network for its Gold Star School Counseling Initiative designed to improve college access and success for under served students.

• Rated third in the nation by the Washington D.C. based National Policy Research Council (NPRC) in a national education ranking "Gold Guide" resource. The guide is considered to be the definitive reference source for city and state rankings, and a powerful tool for understanding and improving America's communities. Rankings were calculated by NPRC researchers who searched over 16,000 sources. The NPRC is the nation's only private "think tank," dedicated solely to serving state and local government officials and those individuals and institutions that work closely with them.

• Recognized by the Education Commission of the States (ECS) for being on target for meeting the implementation requirements of the rigorous accountability law enacted by Congress in 2001, the *No Child Left Behind Act* (NCLB).

• None of this would have been possible without the hard work of educators throughout this state. Thank you for the work you do. I hope to see many of you as we travel around the state conducting Town Meetings through the end of October.

Sincerely,




Superintendent of Public Instruction

When will we receive the results?

School corporation offices will receive ISTEP+ reports, including Individual Student Reports, for students in Grades 3, 6, and 8, by December 3, 2004.

School corporation offices will receive ISTEP+ reports, including Individual Student Reports, for students in Grades 4, 5, 7, 9, and 10 in late February or early March 2005. Standard-setting, using Indiana teachers, to set the passing (or "cut") scores must be completed before reports can be printed and shipped.

For additional information, please visit the ISTEP+ Info Center's Web site www.doe.state.in.us/istep. □



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Dr. Suellen Reed, Superintendent of Public Instruction

Wes Bruce - Assistant Superintendent, Center for Assessment, Research, and Information Technology

Mary Tiede Wilhelmus - Director, Communications Office

Marc Steczyk - Editor, Communications Office
Jason Bearce - Associate Editor, Communications Office

Contributors:
Kelly Linz Nelson, Consultant
Michael Douglas, Design Consultant
Marc Steczyk, Desktop Publishing

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New GQE Campaign

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campaign materials for distribution to students and placement in high-traffic areas:

- Pocket fold-out cards;
- Informational brochures;
- Posters;
- CD-ROMs (containing the TV and radio Public



Above: one of the “This is a Test” billboards that are posted along Indiana’s highways.

Service Announcements and electronic copies of the print materials).

In addition to these materials, the Department has created a new Web site at www.IndianaGQE.com to provide



The cover of our information fold-out poster for parents and Grade 3-10 students.

to all students in Grades 3-10, continues our ongoing efforts to help students prepare and make informed decisions for their futures. □

IMPORTANT:

The Education Roundtable recently adopted two resolutions for the Indiana State Board of Education to consider. Both would increase, for most students, the requirements for high school graduation. Please see www.edroundtable.state.in.us to view the resolutions.

Update on Indiana’s Core 40 End-of-Course Assessments

Spring 2004 was the first operational administration of the Core 40 End-of-Course Assessments in Algebra I and English 11. Approximately 70,000 students took the Algebra I assessment and over 50,000 students took the English 11 assessment. Schools were given the option to administer each assessment either online or using paper-and-pencil. Of the participating Algebra I students, about 52,000 tested online and the remainder tested using paper-and-pencil. Of the participating English 11 students, approximately 39,000 tested online and 11,000 took the paper-and-pencil test.

Score reports were available earlier this summer for schools that participated in the test administration. Please check with your Corporation Test Coordinators concerning these reports.

The schedule for the 2004-05 school year is currently being determined, but winter and spring testing windows are anticipated. In addition to Algebra I and English 11 assessments, the state plans to conduct small pilot tests in Algebra II, Biology I, and U.S. History. These pilots will be a representative sample of schools, and the Department will seek voluntary participation from a limited number of schools to meet the necessary demographic criteria. □

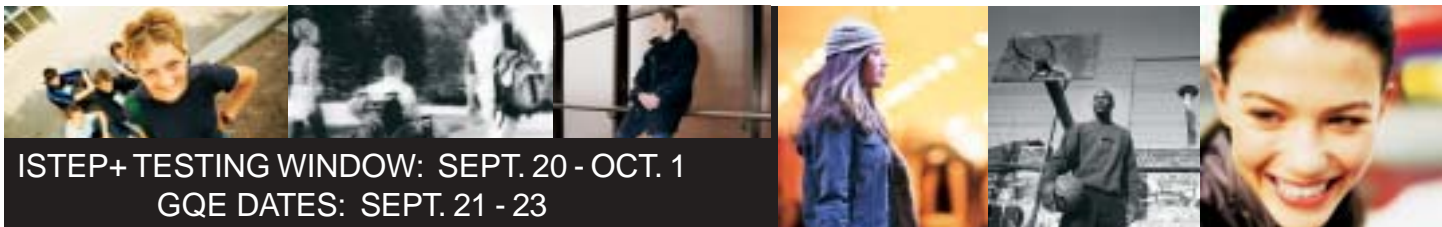
Standards Resources Web Site Updated and Improved

- Address is www.doe.state.in.us/standards

The Academic Standards Resources Web site (www.doe.state.in.us/standards) has been redesigned and updated to include more instructional activities and assessments aligned to the standards than ever before. The site now includes Curriculum Frameworks, Marco Polo Lesson Plans, and Classroom Assessments for Grades K-12 in English/language arts, mathematics, science, and social studies.

For Grades K-8, the Classroom Assessments include two short standards-based quizzes for each standard or cluster of related standard indicators. At the high school level, the assessments are designed to measure student progress at the end of the course. High school classroom assessments are currently available for the following Core 40 courses: English 9, English 12, Geometry, Algebra II, Biology I,

Standards Web Site
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ISTEP+ TESTING WINDOW: SEPT. 20 - OCT. 1
GQE DATES: SEPT. 21 - 23

| Testing Times for ISTEP+ | |
|--------------------------|--------------------|
| Grade | Times |
| 3 | 4 hours 22 minutes |
| 4 | 5 hours 34 minutes |
| 5* | 7 hours 36 minutes |
| 6 | 5 hours 20 minutes |
| 7 | 5 hours 49 minutes |
| 8 | 5 hours 49 minutes |
| 9 | 6 hours 24 minutes |
| 10 | 6 hours 34 minutes |

* includes science

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WWW.INDIANAGQE.COM

WWW.DOE.STATE.IN.US/ISTEP

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Chemistry I, Physics I, U.S. Government, U.S. History, World History, Economics, and World Geography. The Core 40 Classroom Assessments (also available at www.doe.state.in.us/core40) are secure password-protected tests. Teachers who wish to access these assessments should contact their local School Corporation Test Coordinator to obtain a User ID and Password. ☐



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Communications Office
Room 229, State House
Indianapolis, IN 46204-2798

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